

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this application is requested. Claims 19-21 and 24-27 are active in the application subsequent to entry of this Amendment.

This Amendment accompanies a Request for Continued Examination (RCE) filed in response to the Advisory Action of June 10, 2004 in which the examiner indicated the Amendment After Final Rejection filed June 3, 2004 would not be entered as it "raise(d) new issues that would require further consideration and/or search."

This Amendment replaces and expands upon the non-entered Amendment of June 3, 2004 by adding new claims 25 – 27 dependent from independent claims 19, 20 and 24, respectively. These claims are directed to subject matter disclosed at page 16 and again at page 31 of the specification and focus on the temperature at which the drying in step (b) of each independent claim is carried out. This amendment also addresses the examiner's comments on the attachment to the Advisory Action.

As applicants explain in their description of the invention, in prior practice when the electrode coated with the active material slurry was dried at high temperatures (to increase the rate of production) moving with the water contained in the slurry the binder moves to the surface of the electrode and becomes solidified. This movement of the binder takes a significant proportion of the binder from the core plate, located at the center portion of the electrode, from the core and distributes it near the surface, the consequence being the adhesive force between the core plate and the active material is reduced.

In contrast to these prior procedures, the method of the present invention focuses upon concentrating and increasing the amount of binder in the vicinity of the core plate. Namely, when the solvent for the binder is applied from the exposure surface side, the solvent for the binder passes through many openings formed in the core plate and the solvent permeates into the active material layer which was not removed. The solidified binder is re-dissolved and the concentration of the binder in the vicinity of the core plate is increased.

Applicants here repeat the comments and responses to the Final Rejection of March 5, 2004 as set out in the non-entered Amendment of June 3, 2004.

In item 2 of the Official Action the examiner criticizes claims 19-24 for the inclusion of the term "a perforated core plate" which the examiner suggests may be new matter. A closer review of the specification will reveal that a perforated core plate falls within the description of the invention. Attention is directed to the description at page 21, line 4 (referring to Figure 1A of the drawings), the description referring to "a metal core plate (active material holder) 11 made of a punching metal applied with nickel plating on the surface thereof and having formed opening 11a to provide an active material-coated electrode having formed active material layers 12 and 13". The metal core plate is punched with holes thereby providing openings in it as shown in 11a of Figure 1A of the drawings. Applicants believe that the term "a perforated core plate" is

consistent with the description of the invention including the drawings and therefore finds appropriate basis in the original description of the invention. Reconsideration is requested.

In item 3 of the Official Action the clarity of claims 20-24 is questioned. First, the examiner questions how in claim 20 the active material can be removed in step (d) after the step of applying solvent is completed. This procedure finds basis in the original description at page 18, lines 11-16. The solvent is applied to the active material layer side which causes the active material layer to soften so that it is easily removed. For purposes of clarity claim 20 is amended to more closely correspond to the description found at page 18, lines 11-16.

Claims 22 and 23 are canceled to reduce issues.

With regard to claim 24, this relates to the description found at page 16, line 13 to page 17, line 2. That is, when an electrode on which the active material is coated is dried, the amount of binder contained in the active material around the core plate is reduced due to movement of the water contained in the active material. To avoid this problem, solvent is applied to the dried electrode. Perhaps a more apt term is "applying" and claim 24 is amended accordingly.

Applicants submit that the above claim adjustments and amendments resolve the issues raised in the Final Rejection and Advisor Action and place all claims in condition for allowance. If the examiner disagrees or prefers an alternative form of wording, please contact the undersigned by telephone to agree upon a mutually acceptable terminology.

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Further examination is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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